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ENGAGING MARKETING MINDS

AUGUST 2019



# TRUE NORTH

FINDING A LEVEL OF TRUST WITH YOUR MARKET





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# THE BEST POLICY

Once upon a time, a woodsman accidentally dropped his axe into a pond. As he sat and lamented his loss, the god Mercury appeared and assured him he would find his tool. He dove into the pond and soon emerged with a beautiful golden axe bejeweled with diamonds. The woodsman said it was not his so Mercury dove down again, only to return with an even more beautiful axe. Again the woodsman explained that it was not his.

On his third attempt, Mercury found the woodsman's ordinary looking axe, which was far less exotic than the others. Excitedly, the woodsman claimed it and thanked the god for his help. Mercury was so taken with the man's honesty that he gave him all three of the axes.

Honesty is still the best policy. While it may seem difficult at times and sometimes result in bigger issues, in a landscape cluttered with self-indulgence and self-promotion, honesty carries value. As the fable above reminds us, trust takes time.

Being authentic, truthful and transparent takes some intestinal fortitude. It requires a commitment to being honest with yourself and with others. Trust is not a right—it is earned. You build it like you build a bank account. And when you have developed enough trust, people feel safe.

Getting to a place where others feel safe with you is the Holy Grail of branding. It means they not only have an affinity for your company, but that there is a deeper connection. That kind of rapport does not happen because we tell others to trust us. It is built through experience and action.

Now more than ever, consumers do not want to be told you are “the real deal.” They want to determine that on their own. They want to bond and commune with their brands. Just as Mercury's trust in the woodsman grew, consumers will develop trust in their own time.

We hope we are earning your trust. We endeavor to act in your best interest and explore the things that matter most to you. Creating content with honesty and sincerity is enriching on so many levels. It affords us a better understanding of our clients and provides an opportunity to earn your trust.

Our cover feature, “True North,” is all about creating genuine relationships between your brand and consumers by being authentic. The second feature, “Pre-suasion,” discusses a great concept on how to build long-term relationships.

We hope you enjoy the issue and that on some small level it inspires a level of trust.

Warmest wishes,



Gina M. Danner, CEO



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**BEING AUTHENTIC, TRUTHFUL AND TRANSPARENT TAKES SOME INTESTINAL FORTITUDE. IT REQUIRES A COMMITMENT TO BEING HONEST WITH YOURSELF AND WITH OTHERS.**

## connect

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# PRE- SUA SION

## PREPARING YOUR AUDIENCE FOR WHAT'S TO COME BY ALYSSA RUANE

**A SONG BY QUEEN.** A snapshot of a runner striding across the finish line. A comparison of your achievements and your competitors' shortcomings. These three potential marketing elements have one thing in common—one single, underlying message: victory.

It is this hyper-focus—seemingly insignificant details—that are the basis of a strategy known as “pre-suasion.” The term, created by author, speaker and researcher Robert Cialdini, is defined as “the process of arranging for recipients to be receptive to a message before they encounter it.” In other words, strategically guiding your audience’s mindset to be more open to your core message when you do push it.

To help cover the idea in more detail, Cialdini wrote “Pre-Suasion: A Revolutionary Way to Influence and Persuade.” The book is his second after “Influence,” which focuses on the idea that the single key element a brand must have for success is an indestructible, highly edited message. This time, he is saying





you must prepare your audience before delivering this message.

"Researchers like me have studied how to best persuade over time," says Cialdini, who also is Regents' Professor Emeritus of Psychology and Marketing at Arizona State University. "We've learned over the years about which elements to build into a message. My 'Influence' book says if you include one or more of these elements, you significantly increase likelihood of success."

But Cialdini says he and other researchers missed a crucial component of the process. This crucial component is none other than pre-suasion—preparing the minds of your audience to react the way you want them to react to your message.

To be fair, Cialdini has his share of skeptics. "How can you get people to agree to a message if they don't know what's in it?" he posits, hypothetically. "It's not magic; it's solid behavioral science," he says, answering his question. "Pre-suasion may be a new term, but there's nothing new about marketers being concerned with the way their audience perceives brand messaging. First impressions are everything, after all."

Think of it as your brand being a new kid in high school. As Kyle M.K., author of "The Economics of Emotion: How to Build a Business Everyone Will Love" says, "If you show up with a mustard stain on your shirt, you'll be known as Mustard Kid from that point forward."

## PRACTICING PRE-SUASION

In a nutshell, many of the elements of pre-suasion are similar to subliminal messaging. To link back to the opening example, imagine that you are shopping for running shoes. You go to two stores, both with the same offerings, same prices. In Store A, there is calming, acoustic music playing. In Store B, there is a vintage video cast on the wall: Steve Prefontaine is crossing the finish line as he sets another U.S. long distance running record.

Which store are you more likely to purchase running shoes from?

Store B brings your attention to what it wants you to focus on—the correlation between running shoes and winning. Store A distracts you with an unaligned ambiance

## DEFINING YOUR BRAND'S PERSONALITY

**K**yle M.K. also is a brand loyalty consultant. He says that if you don't spend any time on your brand messaging, you will have a very disjointed brand personality. Your customers won't be drawn in.

On the other hand, if you spend too much time on your brand messaging, it will come across as inauthentic, too calculated, trying to be cool.

The fix is something M.K. calls a brand filter. "Your executives down to your support team need a simple brand filter to put all their communications through. A perfect filter contains key personality traits such as humorous, sarcastic, motivating, charming, self-deprecating, etc."

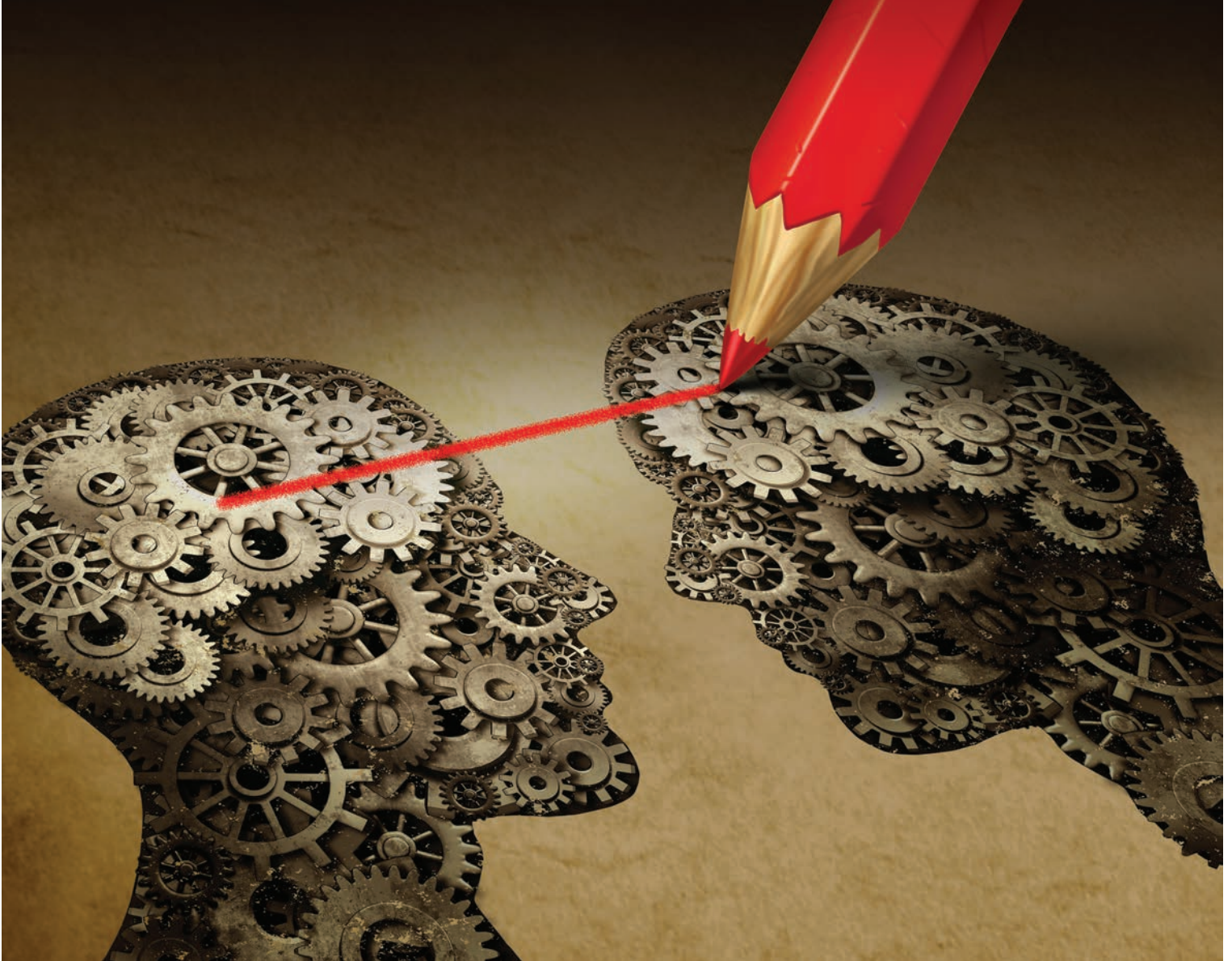
His "brand filter" is not much different than Cialdini's "pre-suasion" techniques. Cialdini encourages using the same words your audience does. Naturally, people often gravitate to those they feel they have something in common with. These little adjustments can make or break your branding and ability to attract new customers.

Plus, M.K. says you can learn a lot about your audience if you simply listen. "I always push my clients to look at social comments of their ideal target audiences to see if they're an angry group, a funny group, or a carefree group. If you also have behavioral data on how they communicate with your

website, app, store and support team, that's helpful to determine things like if they're a laid back group or if they're short on time."

Having this insight is key to choosing which elements of pre-suasion to employ. Because scarcity and urgency just might be exactly what your busy customer needs to pull the trigger.





that is not speaking to the brand's core message.

Cialdini's book is filled with case studies similar to this anecdote. In fact, he cites 810 sources. Each one details one of many elements of pre-suasion—reciprocity, consistency, establishing authority and doing everything intentionally, to name a few. That's why he's sure to cite his research, because his personal brand centers on information and research. What would it say about him if none of his claims were supported?

"Everything should have a purpose," Cialdini reiterates.

Because today's consumers are inundated with information at every touchpoint, it is increasingly important to help consumers direct their attention to what it is you want them to see. Essentially, guide them to a decision. That means cutting out the clutter not directly related to your key value proposition. It is also how


you keep it ethical, Cialdini says.

Here's another example. A mattress company sent out two versions of a survey to customers. One survey featured a background showing coins, the other had a background with clouds. When asked the most important factor in buying a mattress, the customers who received the coin survey overwhelmingly answered "price." The customers with the cloud survey chose "comfort."

While the customers did not realize it, the imagery accompanying the content pushed them to think a certain way. Of course, as you might imagine, the customers were not too thrilled to hear this. Customers want to believe they are in control. They want to make their own decisions. Nobody wants to admit they were influenced by a brand. So, to keep pre-suasion ethical and employ it correctly, Cialdini says it is a two-stage process. First, identify the key

element inside your message, your core differentiator. "In messages, you get all kinds of information and distractions that may not be directly related to your brand. What is the key feature of what you offer? Is it cost, reliability, safety? We should focus people on the aspect of our message that makes it wisest for them to choose us."

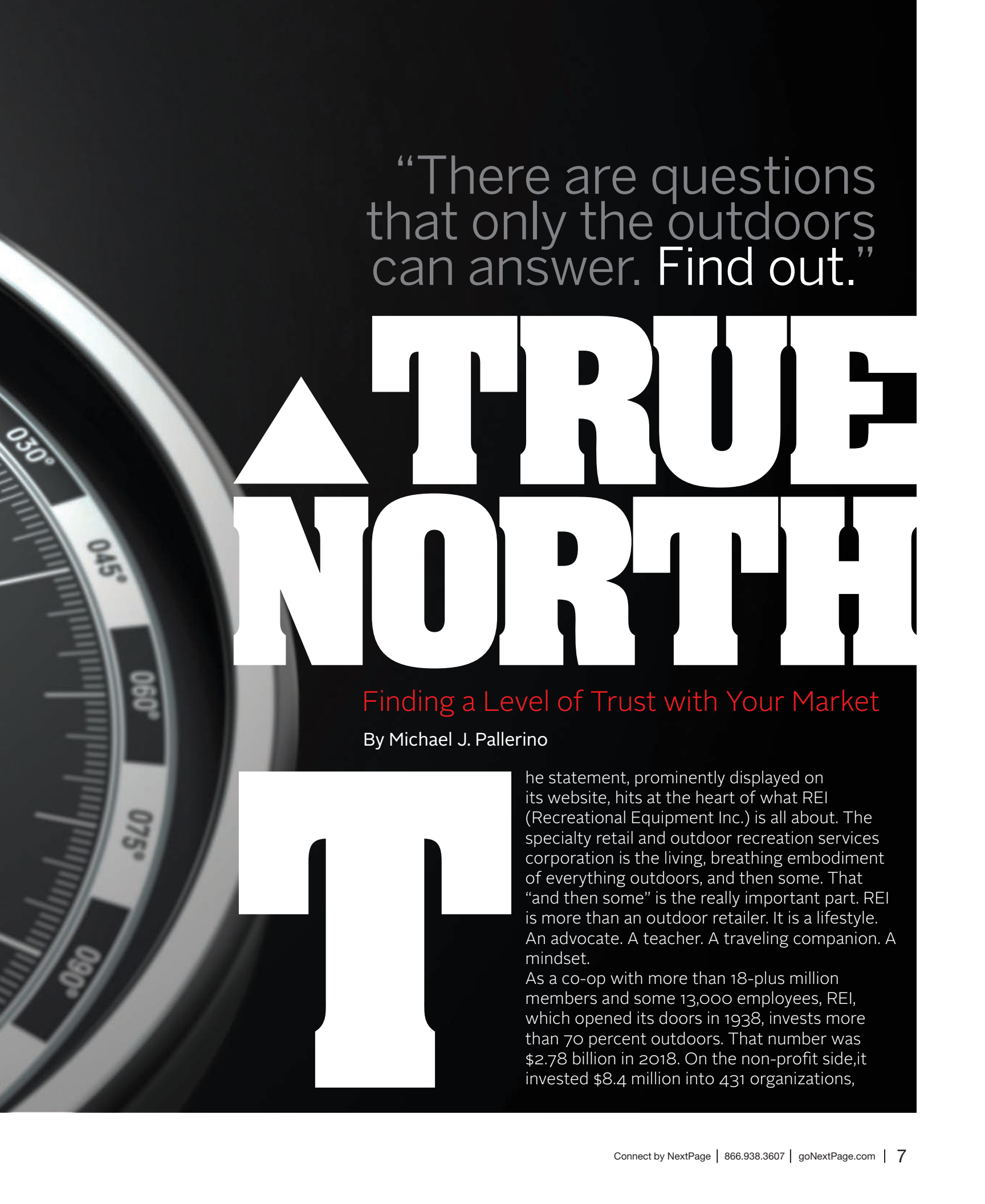
Second, take that concept and bring attention to it before your customers receive your message. You can do this with music, images, words, environment, setting, and the like.

The use of the word "wise" is the essence of the ethical question. Marketers must be responsible with pre-suasion and use it to help the consumer make the best decision. You're throwing your best feature in the hat, and all your efforts are pointing to that singular message. Because pre-suasion requires aligning every element of your brand, rock-solid branding is more important than ever. 









“There are questions  
that only the outdoors  
can answer. Find out.”

# ▲ TRUE NORTH

Finding a Level of Trust with Your Market

By Michael J. Pallerino

**T**

he statement, prominently displayed on its website, hits at the heart of what REI (Recreational Equipment Inc.) is all about. The specialty retail and outdoor recreation services corporation is the living, breathing embodiment of everything outdoors, and then some. That “and then some” is the really important part. REI is more than an outdoor retailer. It is a lifestyle. An advocate. A teacher. A traveling companion. A mindset.

As a co-op with more than 18-plus million members and some 13,000 employees, REI, which opened its doors in 1938, invests more than 70 percent outdoors. That number was \$2.78 billion in 2018. On the non-profit side, it invested \$8.4 million into 431 organizations,


# BE AUTHENTIC

and \$204 million in member dividends and REI credit card rewards.

In a time when consumers can spot a brand trying to feign authenticity, Jeffrey Hayzlett says REI is one you should try to emulate. The former CMO of Kodak, bestselling author and judge on TV's "Celebrity Apprentice" believes that if you are going to market who you are and what you stand for, you better be able to walk the walk. "Engagement is everything. It's all about being able to connect in a more targeted, meaningful, authentic way."

If your takeaway is that being authentic shows, you're right. Hayzlett says not being authentic when you connect with someone doesn't end well. Intimate moments and experiences matter. Curated experiences are what people want.

Take REI's "Opt Outside" movement. Started several years ago as a Black Friday boycott (the retailer closed its doors on the day), the campaign has evolved into a movement that urges people to step away from their screens and get outside throughout the year. The call to adventure encourages people to commit to an adventure, and then share photos and stories via the #OptOutside hashtag.

Hayzlett says the beauty is in the execution. It's not a marketing trick. REI is not asking people to spend money in its stores. It just wants them to get active. "REI connects with those who are more experiential, more experience-based—the people who live it day in and day out." 

**SCAN THE MARKETING WORLD** and you will see a landscape of brands working feverishly to connect to their communities. And while marketers will never be able to stop the onslaught of technology, the magic bullet, so to speak, is building intimacy. Listening and asking questions of your customers builds these bridges. It is all about being authentic.

And while many brands say they understand this strategy, too many forget to embrace the most fundamental factor: Without customers and relationships, you don't have much of a brand. Let's not kid ourselves—this is not anything new. Every brand understands that it must forge a relationship with its community. The proof is in the execution.

"It's vital that brands invest in true relationships with their communities to gain an understanding of what their consumers

need, build trust and ultimately deliver the highest value product or service," says Robert Glazer, founder and CEO of Acceleration Partners, a leading independent affiliate management agency.

Glazer says that begins with understanding the motives of the consumer. A lack of understanding is often a source of dissatisfaction—in all types of relationships. Nurturing quality relationships begins with gaining a clear understanding of your communities' problems and identifying the solutions you can provide.

One of Acceleration Partners' core values is to embrace relationships. "That's because we know that developing honest and transparent relationships not only allows you to excel personally, but professionally as well," Glazer says. "We understand that





**“IT’S VITAL THAT BRANDS INVEST IN TRUE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR COMMUNITIES TO GAIN AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT THEIR CONSUMERS NEED, BUILD TRUST AND ULTIMATELY DELIVER THE HIGHEST VALUE PRODUCT OR SERVICE.”**

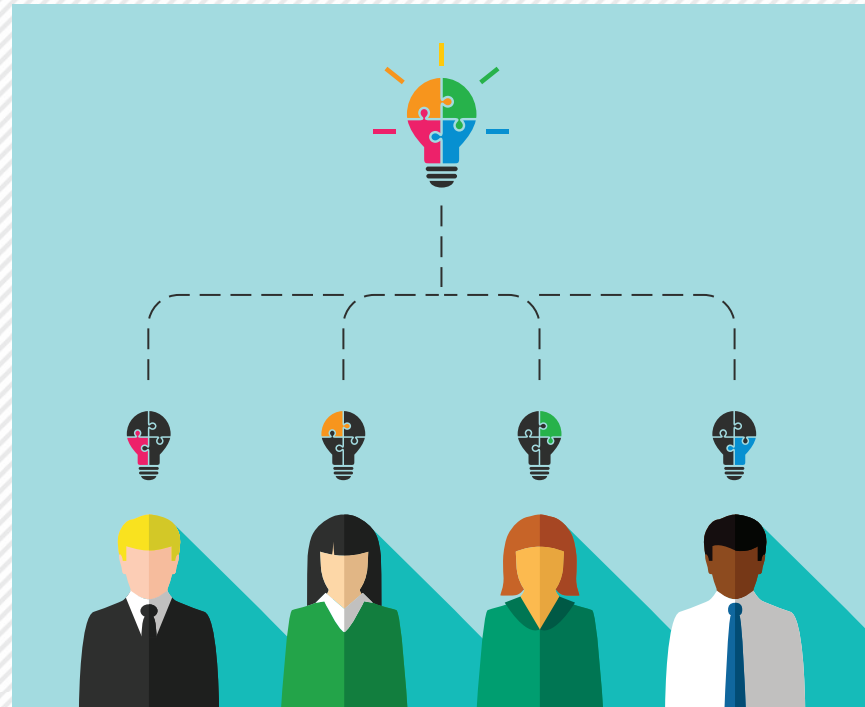
**— ROBERT GLAZER, FOUNDER & CEO, ACCELERATION PARTNERS**

learning from our peers and keeping communication open is an essential component of our success and encourage others to put a greater emphasis on cultivating relationships as well.”

How do you do that? Glazer says you have to be strategic. For example, content that delivers value to your current and prospective customers helps connect you in an authentic way. Creating brand ambassadors and affiliates is another avenue to engage with your community in a more niche and intimate setting. Ambassadors have the ability to humanize your brand in a way that other channels do not. Through both avenues you begin to build trust, a quality that is most inherent to lasting relationships.

“Marketers are missing a vital opportunity to connect with their communities on a deeper level and with more trust and understanding by not buying into the power of relationships,” Glazer says. “They are opting instead for easy automation and doing very impersonal things at scale that have a low ROI. By understanding the story of each of your target audiences, you are able to speak to their unique needs specifically, rather than spreading a generalized message that misses the mark for a variety of your consumers. We are entering the era of personalization.”

REI. Cabela’s. Bass Pro Shops. GoPro. Apple. Lululemon. They are all brands that know the value of being authentic and transparent. It is a strategy with few holes in it. “When customers understand your brand, what you stand for, what you deliver for them and everything it conveys, they will become your ambassadors willingly,” says Hayzlett, who also is CEO of The Hayzlett Group. “When your target consumers understand every nuance of your brand, you’ve hit the branding jackpot.”



## **YOUR 11-STEP PLAN TO AUTHENTICITY**

There are myriad ways to create an authentic air to your brand—and then keep it there. Creating a brand your customers trust and follow is as easy as employing the following tips, compliments of the Forbes Agency Council.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>01 Be confident</b>                                    | <b>07 Keep it simple, stupid</b>                   |
| <b>02 Show them who you are</b>                           | <b>08 Be consistent</b>                            |
| <b>03 Don't pander</b>                                    | <b>09 Remember that trust is built, not bought</b> |
| <b>04 Tell them a story</b>                               | <b>10 Have clear core values</b>                   |
| <b>05 Understand your brand's goals &amp; personality</b> | <b>11 Be Passionate &amp; transparent</b>          |
| <b>06 Actually be authentic</b>                           |  |

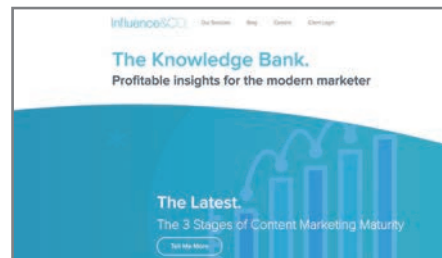
# TACTICS

## CONTENT MAKEOVER

### YOUR 3-STEP PLAN TO REFRESHING YOUR NARRATIVE

Good content attracts readers and builds communities. If it's good, it can go viral. If it's not, well, that's another story altogether. Stale, under-performing blogs can drive people away. But you have options. With just a few simple steps, you can drive

more ROI from your efforts without having to publish anything new. The team at Influence & Co. offers this three-step makeover plan to help turn your low-performing content into something that drives results.



#### 1. CONSOLIDATE POSTS TO CREATE CONTENT PILLARS

Define the topics your audience wants your brand to lead the conversation on. Once you pick the topics, go through your current blog content and list everything you already have that touches on those areas. Look for opportunities to consolidate posts, optimize for keywords, and turn the combined content into an up-to-date piece that rolls the strong points of several related pieces of content into one.

#### 2. REFRESH DATED CONTENT USING A KNOWLEDGE BANK

Knowledge banks are essential content creation tools. These banks should house insights, expertise, data, personal stories, information, and more from your team. Having that stored

content ready to roll will help you easily fuel your content efforts. To get started, conduct interviews with the experts from within your company, including executives, marketing and sales reps, etc., then store and organize their answers.

#### 3. FIND OPPORTUNITIES TO OPTIMIZE FOR LEAD GENERATION

This will make it easy for people who are reading your content to take the next step and engage with you further. Also, it can turn a low-performing piece of content into one of your best pieces almost instantly. Have a store of in-depth gated content on your site and include relevant calls to action throughout each blog post that you publish, as well as at the end of each article.

## A MATTER OF TRUST

### 4 TRAITS EVERY PIECE OF CONTENT SHOULD HAVE

If you want your brand to be a trusted resource, you have to offer your audience something valuable. That means every experience you create should not only reflect your focus on winning in the moment they are paying attention, but also in every one that precedes and follows it. According to the Content Marketing Institute's "B2B Content Marketing 2019: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—North America" report, 68

percent of all B2B marketers say they've used content marketing successfully to build credibility with their audience. If you're looking to earn trust through content, here are four traits you need to incorporate into its creation:

- 1. RISK APPROPRIATE** — avoid asking for something before proving the value
- 2. CONSISTENT** — deliver reliable



content regularly over time

**3. PERSONAL** — based on reliable information the visitor has willingly given

**4. CUMULATIVE** — building on what came before





# HOW TO MAKE YOUR CONTENT MORE ENGAGING

Engagement is the buzzword that everybody loves to throw around today. But when it comes to connecting with your audience, engagement really is critical. In a time when content is everywhere you look, being able to make yours stand out is a magic trick worth mastering. Here are six ways you can capture your audience's attention, compliments of social media marketing outsourcing agency Mouonline:

## DATA & IMAGES

Credible stats and studies will help strengthen the power of your content

## QUOTES

Bite-size, insightful snapshots will help your audience engage with your content

## TELL A STORY

Stories help your readers relate to the topic on an emotional level

## NEWS & TRENDS

Keep an eye on what's happening around you and use it to connect the dots with your content

## SUBHEADS & BULLETS

Highlighting key parts of a story help make your content easy to follow for your readers

## THE RIGHT TOOLS

Find the right vehicles and avenues to create the type of powerful content your audience needs

## 3 CONTENT MARKETING MISTAKES (AND FIXES) YOU SHOULD LEARN

**GAFFES. OVERSIGHTS. ERRORS. IT HAPPENS.** As with anything else, when it comes to content marketing, you learn from your mistakes (or at least you should). To help you tackle some of the mistakes brands make in the ever-evolving content marketing world, the Content Marketing Institute ([contentmarketinginstitute.com](http://contentmarketinginstitute.com)) offers a number of tips you can utilize to keep your momentum moving forward:

### Mistake No. 1

#### GETTING OFF ON THE WRONG FOOT

The biggest mistake some brands make in content production is not listening to their customers first—or not looking for suggestions and clues left by search engines that might have instructed them in what their audiences want.

**The fix:** Don't write content for any other purpose than helping people solve a problem.

### Mistake No. 2

#### TRYING TO BE EVERYTHING

Being a thought leader means having introspective, respected positions in an area that people want and need guidance. Being all things to all people doesn't work (and never has).

**The fix:** Divide your content into sections, which will help keep your stream of thought (and your audience's attention span) intact.

### Mistake No. 3

#### POSTING WITHOUT PROOFING

Gaffes. Oversights. Errors. Didn't we just go over this? Hitting "publish" and sending an email that is not professionally executed is bad for your brand. How many times is too many times to have links without actual links?

**The fix:** Triple-check your copy and then triple check which buttons you're clicking on before sending an email newsletter, scheduling a blog or creating a social media post.



## **Integrating old school and new school marketing strategies**

Hey, over here. Look, it's direct mail. That's right, the vaunted marketing strategy continues to make its presence felt in today's marketing landscape as brands

vie for consumer attention. To keep your brand in the race, Chief Marketer offers 10 tips to help integrate old school tactics into today's modern marketing strategies.

### **01 WATCH THE DIGITAL SIGNALS**

Digital data can be used to enhance a brand's existing direct mail lists, clueing companies in to prospect intent.

### **02 CUE VARIABLE PRINTING**

Brands that use direct mail for retargeting often preprint the shells of their mailers and then customize those pieces for every prospect with different messaging, content and images. Today, each of these pieces can be unique and different.

### **03 GET PERSONAL**

Personalize your mailings as much as possible. The more you can customize something, the better it will perform.

### **04 THINK COMPLEMENT**

When factoring your ROI, consider how direct mail fits into your overall marketing scheme. Does the overall

spend make sense? Will it boost your average order size? Do customers who receive mail have a higher response rate?

### **05 MATCHBACK TO SEE YOUR REAL RESULTS**

Want to know how your campaign really performed? Do a matchback against a holdout group. For example, mail 25,000 in your target group and compare results against another control group of 25,000 who did not receive the postcard.

### **06 DON'T BE AFRAID TO GO BIG**

Dimensional direct mail featuring premiums can be very effective to get B2B decision-makers' attention, so get creative to stand out from the crowd. When used properly, swag can help a brand illustrate its brand proposition.

### **07 WATCH THE COMPETITION**

Direct mail doesn't make sense for

every brand in every vertical. See how your competitors are using it and how they fare.

### **08 INCLUDE A CLEAR CALL TO ACTION**

Make sure your recipient knows what the next step is after they read the piece. Everything in your piece—from the personalization to any premiums—should have meaning and tie in to your overall message.

### **09 CREATE A COHESIVE PLAN FOR ATTRIBUTION**

Know exactly how you'll gauge the impact of direct mail. Layer in a second level of attribution criteria.

### **10 LET DATA TAKE THE LEAD**

Pretty is good, but results are better. Finding the right list and choosing who to mail to may not be as sexy, but they're as important.





### **Why does print matter today?**

The “Power of Print” conversation is definitely getting more positive traction these days—an important part of the channel mix amid the dynamic, ever useful, but cluttered digital landscape. The recall and the pleasure of paging through a beautifully curated product earns unparalleled trust from consumers,

### **Why is it making a comeback?**

Over the last few years, consumers have been bombarded with the messaging that print is dead. But now, despite the huge growth of digital, people are starting to realize the important role printed products play in our lives. Print is now being recognized, by far, as one of the most trusted environments for advertisers.

Consumers now want to experience a deeper, more engaging user experience-. Print has a sense of longevity and this is in direct contrast to the virality of fake news. This makes it a very relevant medium. While building any brand across multiple platforms, print still deserves a place as part of the channel mix.

### **How does it differentiate a brand in the current landscape?**

Magazines are still very much an expression of ourselves. They offer brands a place to anchor themselves and the environment of print specifically allows for a much more detailed, or spacious, execution of a brand's strategy. Magazine media publishers are also the original content creators and have been creating content for many years. The teams are seasoned professionals and can bring much to the table, especially when

## **ON THE RECORD WITH JULIA RAPHAELY**

**MEDIA THOUGHT LEADER ON WHY  
WE ARE ALL IN THE CONTENT GAME**



A half a world away and the content game in South Africa is no different than the content game anywhere else. Ask Julia Raphaely and she will tell you that having the ability to be flexible and adaptable is the true secret to success. As a majority shareholder and CEO of Associated Media Publishing (AMP), she heads a multi-platform, brand building media publishing empire that reaches some 20 million consumers each month on the southern tip of Africa.

Boasting four prominent titles in its stable—Cosmopolitan, Good Housekeeping, House and Leisure, and Women on Wheels—AMP speaks to a wide variety of women in their various stages of life and mindsets on paper, online, and on every other platform that exists.

The bounds of print are continually tested, and Raphaely says that seeing and adapting to change is a challenge every brand should embrace, regardless of market. As the brainchild behind AMP's recent “Make Time for Print” campaign, Raphaely boldly portrayed the endearing quality print possesses to evoke memories and incite engagement.

We chatted with her to get her thoughts on why print still matters and how it continues to be a difference maker in consumer engagement.

proper collaborations happen between brand managers, agencies and publishers.

Also, the magazine printed media business is a place where you do what you love and you never work a day in your life. It shows in the product, too.

Magazine printed media is a medium that continues to make a difference in the world. It is by far the cheapest luxury in the world, and it's the only media in which women dominate.

### **What are some of the ways that print touches our lives?**

How would we know what was in our food if it were not for labels? How would we know what size our clothing was? How would we distinguish between brands if products were not labeled? How would we feel if there were no more printed newspapers or magazines? The list is endless.

### **What advice can you offer brands (young designers) about print and its value?**

We are all in the content game. We don't just sell magazines; we build brands and audiences through content creation. It is not merely about putting words or design to paper. Fundamentally, it's about inspiring an audience with original and clever concepts. Used smartly, the medium of print can help create and drive conversations that really matter, as well as effect positive change through a relationship with its audience. Lastly, inspiration amounts to nothing if it's not driven by passion; the passion to be innovative and brilliant.



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